

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

221852Z Feb 06

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000274

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA
LONDON PASS TO AMBASSADOR CAMPBELL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP #6

REF: LAGOS 263 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Hostage Welfare Update

[11.](#) (C) Sources including Ijaw traditional leader Chief Edwin Clark tell us medicines sent to the hostages through the State Security Service (SSS) and Delta State have been delivered to the kidnappers. However, we have no confirmation the medication has been passed to the hostages. Willbros informed us AmCit Macon Hawkins is not insulin-dependent, but rather takes pills for a less severe form of diabetes. Willbros is attempting to ascertain whether both Hawkins and AmCit Russell Spell are hypertensive.

[12.](#) (C) Willbros President Etheridge received a phone call today at 1100 detailing financial demands for the hostages' release. Willbros and Control Risk Group (CRG) assessed the call as spurious. Willbros offices in the U.S. yesterday received a voice message purportedly from the hostage-takers, saying one of the nine hostages is critically ill, and referencing two e-mails sent to the Willbros homepage detailing financial demands for his release. (Comment: We believe the communication refers to Macon Hawkins, the AmCit with diabetes. End comment.)

[13.](#) (C) Willbros has now received five e-mail messages through their website, two sent by a man claiming to be Martins Oshen of the Niger Delta Patriotic Movement (NDPM). The first message demands 500,000 USD within five days for the release of the ill hostage, and the other advises foreign workers and vessels to leave the Delta area and claims the hostages have been moved to a nearby country. (Note: The second message with the warnings to foreign workers was also emailed to some other foreign missions in Nigeria. End note.) Willbros, with assistance from FBI, Shell, and CRG, crafted and sent a reply requesting proof of life to the originating address. Willbros has received a response which ignored their proof of life and humanitarian inquiries, and instead repeated the demand for 500,000 USD to be wired to a bank account. The other e-mails also consist largely of financial demands, although one does mention the possibility of arranging phone contact with a hostage.

[14.](#) (C) Chief Edwin Clark confirmed to us that he is leading Delta State Governor Ibori's hostage negotiating committee. He does not appear yet fully engaged at the operational level. He indicated he was confident the hostages were fine and would not be harmed.

Energy Update: Shell Facilities Still Closed

[15.](#) (C) Forcados terminal, "Sea Eagle," and other Shell facilities are still not operational. Security concerns have delayed a damage assessment of the Forcados terminal. Shell production remains reduced by approximately 550,000 bpd. Shell confirmed the houseboat attack near Forcados two days ago.

[16.](#) (C) Damage to a gas feeder pipeline is still reducing power generation by approximately 850 MW (of a total of 3200 MW nationwide). Nigerian Gas Company executive A.L. Yukubu reported no immediate prospect of repairing the Escravos-Lagos gas pipeline due to security reasons.

[17.](#) (C) Chevron evacuated personnel from the creeks last weekend. There is no production impact yet, but after 7-10 days lack of maintenance may begin to impair production.

Media Update

18. (C) Multiple press sources report militant threats to infiltrate corporate compounds wearing oil company uniforms to launch more attacks and take additional hostages. This includes offices in Lagos and Abuja. A leading daily detailed a list of nine demands by the militants to Great Britain, such as re-negotiating (colonial-era) treaties with the Ijaw Kingdom, ordering "occupation forces" of the Nigerian State to vacate Ijaw and Niger Delta territory, and handing over the Niger Delta to the United Nations as Trust Territory. The militants also demand the U.N. set up a tribunal to investigate genocide in various areas in the Niger Delta. While the demands are political, as were earlier MEND demands, they do not directly conform to past MEND demands. Governor Ibori or other GON negotiating representatives have not confirmed these demands as authentic.

Military Activity; Additional Troops Gathering

19. (S/NF) Planners at Nigerian Defense headquarters are still moving toward a 1-3 March implementation date for the build-up of Nigerian military in the Delta region. (Comment: Marine Attache doubts the Nigerian military's ability to meet this timeline, but any noticeable troop movements will become known to the militias and will put them on further edge. End comment.)

110. (C) Shell reported the JTF had captured one militia member in a 20 February skirmish, who Shell has heard revealed the location of Government E militia to the Nigerian military.

Consular Update

11. (C) All Consular staff are accounted for. There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits.

112. (C) The Thai Ambassador to Kenya and Thai MFA Consular officials met with Consulate personnel to discuss coordination through the crisis. While the Ambassador will depart Nigeria shortly, Willbros has made arrangements to brief daily the Thai Honorary Consul in Lagos, and Egyptian and Philippine Consuls in Abuja. We have also contacted the Egyptian and Philippine representatives to offer updates, and advise them Shell has invited them to the daily crisis group meeting in Lagos. Willbros and Shell are working with HMG representatives to incorporate these missions into final evacuation planning for the hostages.

113. (C) The Foreign Emergency support Team (FEST) is expected to arrive tomorrow.
BROWNE